



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	OUTGOING DIRECTOR'S NOTE	2
02	WHO WE ARE	3
03	MILESTONES	4
04	2024 OVERVIEW	6
05	BY THE NUMBERS	14
06	IN THE NEWS	16
07	INCOMING DIRECTORS' NOTE	16



A word from our **outgoing director**

Make the Road Pennsylvania turned 10 this year! This fall we hosted our first ever annual fundraiser where we gathered with our members, friends, family, and allies to commemorate and celebrate all that we have accomplished over the past decade. We honored those who were key thought partners and helped establish Make the Road Pennsylvania, member leaders who have helped shape us into what we are today, and one of our funders whose support has given us the opportunity to grow and expand.

Over the last 10 years, we have fought for dignity and respect for our members, who have been the ones leading the fights in language justice, housing and climate justice, education justice, immigration reform and worker's rights. We have been able to win municipal IDs for undocumented folks in the city of Reading. We fought against 287g, which would effectively turn local officials into ICE agents. We kept ICE from entering our schools. We made historic changes to make it easier for Pennsylvanians to vote and established vote by mail with Act 77. We won the Whole Home Repairs Act, shut down the Berks Detention Center and fixed the education formula, sending a historic down payment to invest in the poorest school districts in our state.

With your support and partnership, we have been able to expand and grow with a team of over 30 staff members and organizing centers in Allentown, Reading, Philadelphia, and now Hazleton.

I joined this organization as an intern at 23 years old back in 2017 and became the Executive Director at 25 in 2019. It has been my greatest honor and privilege to lead and grow this powerful organization over the last 6 years.

When Patty Torres joined the organization in 2020 and Diana Robinson in 2021, I knew they would be the perfect duo to lead the organization when the time came for me to step down. Over the last two years, we have worked together to ensure that Patty and Diana felt prepared to lead together.

We are so appreciative of your ongoing support and partnership and look forward to continuing to work together toward a more just and equitable society.

For nearly eight of the 10 years we have been in existence, I have had the privilege of having a front row seat to build this organization and watch it grow into the powerhouse it is today. Thank you to the staff, members, allies, donors and foundations who trusted me.

I am so excited to see Patty and Diana's vision for the next chapter of the organization. I cannot wait to see how we will change the state of PA over the next 10 years, and inevitably change the country.

¡Si se puede!

Maegan Llerena

Maegan Llerena
Outgoing Executive Director

Who We Are

OUR MISSION

To build power in Latinx and Black immigrant communities and working-class communities of color. We empower community members to be the principal agents and leaders in challenging and dismantling systemic oppression through civic engagement and advocacy, community organizing, policy innovation and transformative education.

OUR VISION

MRPA envisions our work as planting the seeds of collective liberation, helping to build a world based on justice and equality, where there is respect and dignity in all aspects of our lives, and where communities exercise self-determination. We empower individuals and communities to transform the balance of power – at work, at home, at school, and in any other public or private institution that makes decisions that impact us. We envision a more democratic way of building collective power, fostering participatory democracy inside and outside MRPA in order to take on bigger and bigger fights. We aspire to exercise that power to deliver lasting solutions to the problems facing our communities, including advancing racial and economic justice, civic engagement, pro-immigrant, pro-worker, pro-LGBTQ equality solutions, safe and affordable housing, climate justice and quality education for all.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We fight for a world where all of our community members can breathe clean air and drink clean water, where we are actively tackling climate change, and preventing future harm. We fight to ensure that every child, regardless of their background, identity, or zip code, is attending a public school with a safe environment and the resources necessary to help them succeed. We fight to end detention and deportation, ensure all PA residents, regardless of immigration status, can live with dignity and respect, and build the leadership of immigrant members of our communities. At Make the Road PA, we have always understood the deep connection between issue-based organizing and non-partisan civic engagement. We know the voices of our community matter, and we're committed to making sure folks have an opportunity to make their voice heard. Knowing and understanding the intersectionality of all of our work and the different issue areas we work on is at the heart of our organization. This guides us in all of our decisions.

2024 Milestones

EXPANDED TO THE CITY OF HAZELTON

MRPA has expanded to a fourth city: Hazleton! Hazleton is a small city in Luzerne County with approximately 30,000 people, 63% of whom are Latino. Hazleton has lacked political representation, struggles with economic development and fair representation in its school board, and has ongoing concerns about discrimination in education, policing, housing and employment. Over 50 members and staff gathered in Hazleton during the summer to have deep conversations with neighbors, friends, and family about Make the Road PA and the importance of getting out the vote. Together, we were able to engage hundreds of community members across Hazleton and talk to them about the issues they care about most. We now have an office space with three full time staff working in Hazleton and the strong support and partnership of Hazleton Integration Project helping us plant roots in our new community.



HELPED SECURE \$1.1 BILLION INVESTMENT FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE 2025 STATE BUDGET

As part of a court decision that found that Pennsylvania's system of public school funding violates the constitutional rights of students in the poorest districts, Make the Road PA was a key partner of the PA School Works coalition that won the largest single-year investment of \$1.1 billion for FY 2024-25 intended to address inequities between wealthy and poor school districts. This budget also codified a requirement for continued investments in the subsequent years to close the achievement gap in the most underserved schools that have been disadvantaged by this unjust funding system.

REGISTERED OVER 12,300 VOTERS

[The voter registration gap for Latinos is deep, and well-documented](#): Only 57.8% of Latino citizens are registered to vote, compared to 70.8% of white citizens. We set out on a mission to change that. Our dedicated team worked tirelessly throughout North Philadelphia, Bensalem, Reading, Allentown and Hazleton to register over 12,300 voters in 2024. We know that civic engagement is at the core of making our communities heard and it helps build toward the equitable and just society that we need. Our vote is our power!



GATHERED WITH MAKE THE ROAD FAMILY IN NEVADA

We are proud and fortunate to be part of the powerful family of Make the Road organizations nationwide. In September, all five of our sister organizations gathered in Nevada with hundreds of our staff and members. This was a space for strengthening community across Make the Road member leaders from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Nevada building solidarity around shared struggles like housing unaffordability, and the crisis of corporate controlled housing markets. Hundreds marched together in Las Vegas, calling for \$1 trillion in funding for green, affordable housing, stronger tenant protections, and community control. Amid a growing housing crisis across the country leaving thousands of families struggling with rising rent costs and lack of affordable housing, Make the Road PA is committed to continuing the fight for housing justice.

CELEBRATED MAKE THE ROAD PA'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY!

This fall, MRPA turned 10. We took time to celebrate our accomplishments over the last ten years and we also honored integral people who helped shape the organization into what it is today including MRPA member leaders Francisca Mendez, Ana Ramos, Maria Hernandez as our Community Leadership Visionaries, Javier Valdez and Deb Axt as our Founding Visionaries, Kati Sipp as our Strategic Visionary and the Climate and Clean Energy Equity Fund as our Philanthropic Visionary. To watch the video we presented at our gala in honor of the work done over the past decade, visit bit.ly/10yearsmrpa.



2024 Overview

Education Justice

In 2023, the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court ruled that the state's public school funding system was unconstitutional. The \$4.5 billion gap between current funding and adequate funding means the students who need the most get the least, and every Pennsylvanian suffers when kids are shortchanged of their chance to get an education: low achievement gaps of our students, and under-resourced, understaffed and crumbling public schools hurt us all. The \$1.1 billion that was secured for FY25 has a significant impact for the Philadelphia, Reading, Allentown and Hazleton school districts where we work, which are among the poorest school districts in the state. As part of our yearly [May Day of action](#) we mobilized over two hundred MRPA members across our four cities to rally for public school funding equity to the state capitol. More than 15 elected officials attended and spoke at the rally. That same day we also met with 80+ elected officials and/or their staffers, where parents and students shared testimonies about the impact of lack of funding in their local schools. MRPA is committed to pushing to close this gap to achieve fully and fairly public school funding for all students in Pennsylvania.



On June 10, 2024 we organized an action with the All Eyes on Yass campaign to spread awareness of elected officials who received funds from the richest man in Pennsylvania, Jeffrey Yass – a staunch advocate for public school privatization. Over 300 people from community organizations, students, teachers, parents and MRPA members gathered at the capitol steps with elected champions to demand full funding for public schools and an end to school vouchers. Click [here](#) to learn more.



Make the Road PA is an intergenerational organization, and that means we invest deeply in our youth—the next generation of leaders. Our Youth Power Project's Summer academy is focused on deepening the power and skill set of young organizers. Over the course of five days, we dove into everything from organizing and movement terminology, the importance of building solidarity, mapping power, campaigning and issue cutting, base building, and canvassing. All seven students graduated from the youth organizing 101 programming and were awarded certificates created by our very own Philly youth leader Katalina, who has been a part of MRPA for the last 9 years, coming to our events with her dad.

Immigrant Rights

This year one of our members, Linda, faced deportation and separation from her family after an immigration judge wrongly denied her asylum claim without having attended any of her hearings. MRPA and key partners such as CASA, Free Migration Project and Juntos worked hard to mobilize the community, elevate her case publicly, and pressure decision makers to honor the administration's commitment to keeping immigrant families together. This case is still ongoing, and we are committed to supporting our members through this process.





Parole in Place Work Permit Expansion: In collaboration with the American Business Immigration Coalition (ABIC), CASA and with the leadership of State Representative Danilo Burgos, MRPA added pressure on the Biden administration to expand protections for undocumented immigrants. While President Biden did sign an executive action that provided protections for undocumented immediate family members of U.S citizens, estimated to impact more than 500,000 families including 63,000 in PA, a federal judge unfortunately struck it down on November 15, 2024, halting USCIS's pending applications process.

In 2024, we worked on our organizational scenario planning for either candidate winning the U.S. Presidential Election. We identified this as an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the evolving political and cultural landscape, helping clarify which strategies and structures our organization should prioritize building. We used the first 100 days scenario as a springboard and took a deeper dive into building readiness and coordination.



Housing and Climate Justice

Whole Home Repairs Program (WHR): A safe, healthy, stable home is the foundation for any family and a basic human right. In 2022 we organized to pass the Whole Home Repairs Act, winning \$125 million for low-income homeowners and small landlords to weatherize and repair their homes. Since then, we continue our advocacy efforts to ensure permanent funding and an efficient implementation of this funding. Whole Home Repairs is working. In 2024, some of our members benefited from the program and many more are on a county waiting list due to lack of funding. Governor Shapiro included \$50 million for this program in his proposed 2024 budget. We were disappointed that despite the demonstrated need, the program was not funded due to state legislators voting along party lines.



With our statewide PACET table we have been engaging other pathways to fund the WHR program. MRPA has been advocating for federal funding through programs including Home Electrification Appliance Rebate Program (HEAR) and Home Efficiency Rebates (HER) that are being allocated through the state agency Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to include WHR language so that some of the funding can be used to support WHR. One immediate outcome of our advocacy was securing interpretation services for all DEP public meetings. This progress enabled us to support members in directly voicing the urgent need for housing repairs by submitting public testimony advocating for Whole Homes Repair funding.

At the local level in Lehigh, Berks and Philadelphia counties, Make the Road Pennsylvania worked with partners to hold multiple meetings with local administrators of WHR to address bureaucratic hurdles that delayed the implementation of the program and highlight the challenges that applicants were having. In Philadelphia, we collaborated with PACET to provide oversight on the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation (PHDC) for the failure to implement WHR and other housing programs like Basic Systems Repair. This included preparing members for meeting Philadelphia city councilors and initiating a fact-finding meeting with PHDC. In Allentown, we met with Mayor Tuerk to share the impact and need of a well-funded Whole Home Repairs Program. Soon after our meeting, he committed \$750,000 ARPA funds to home repair and eviction diversion in Allentown.

WATER CONTAMINATION

Lead poisoning is a preventable epidemic, which disproportionately harms Black and brown children. As part of our work building communities where people live with respect and dignity, Make the Road PA is committed to lead-free homes. In 2024, we continued to conduct research around the prevalence of lead pipes and water contamination across the cities we work in. We have been educating our members about the seriousness of this health hazard, the slow remediation processes, and how institutions must be held accountable. The solution is a full and fast identification and replacement of lead pipes. In 2025, we will work alongside our members and allies to identify the best solutions for holding institutions accountable for locating and fully replacing lead pipes. No one in our communities should unknowingly consume contaminated water, exposing themselves—especially children—to lifelong health risks.



Workers' Rights Highlights

Pennsylvania is stuck in the past with a minimum wage of \$7.25/hr, which has not increased for the last 15 years. MRPA is fighting to increase the minimum wage so that all people make a livable wage to support themselves and their family with dignity. We worked with Senator Tartaglione on a bill that would raise the minimum wage to \$20/hr, and include a cost of living adjustment to ensure wages stay current with inflation and lift preemption so that local municipalities can set wages that fit their communities. Though the bill has since stalled, MRPA will continue to fight to increase the minimum wage and end pre-emption.

Voter to Member Program

This program bridges our issue-based organizing work and our civic engagement work. Our Voter to Member Program engages voters who express interest in our issue areas and integrates them into our organization.

We spoke with 4,500 voters through our get out the vote, voter education, and voter registration programs. Voters who express interest in learning more about MRPA are invited to attend our monthly new member orientation meetings where they are able to meet staff members and learn about all of the work MRPA does.



After a person attends the meeting, one of our organizers follows up and schedules a one on one meeting where they can get to know the person better and what they are interested in. They are then connected to our issue-based organizing work based on their interests.

In 2024, we held monthly new member orientations across our four cities and engaged 790 new individuals through this program.

Defending Democracy

One person, one vote is a fundamental principle of our democracy, and as corporations, billionaires, bad actors, and the far-right attempt to distort that principle, Make the Road PA stands firm. In our civic engagement work, we inform voters about the seats up for election and the responsibilities of those offices. We also ensure voters know important deadlines such as when the voter registration deadline is, are informed about their rights around language access when voting, and know the process of voting by mail including how to sign up to vote by mail and where drop boxes are located.

Voting Rights

We held 5 voting rights training sessions with our staff and members. MRPA continued to advocate for protecting voting rights as a partner of Pennsylvania Voice state table. We also worked with Speaker Joanna McClinton on two pieces of legislation around voting rights for early in-person voting and same day voter registration.



Guardians of Democracy

MRPA trained 16 active guardian members who engaged 1,873 people across Allentown, Reading, and Philadelphia to mobilize voters. Through this relational organizing program, each guardian connected with friends, family, and neighbors to drive voter turnout.

Leadership Development

In 2024 we had over 70 leadership development opportunities for our members and over 230 individual members participated in an event including helping facilitate a MRPA meeting, speaking at a public event, or being interviewed by press.

Plus...

One of our Seasonal Canvassers became a Digital Associate.



Our Co-Deputy Directors will become the first Co-Executive Directors of Make the Road PA.

Field Organizers began running our monthly new member orientations where they teach potential new members about our organization and the work that we do.



Two of our field organizers were promoted – one to Field Associate, overseeing our civic engagement programs in Bucks and Philadelphia counties, and the other to Data Associate.

By the Numbers



▶ MOBILIZED HUNDREDS OF MEMBERS TO OVER **80** ACTIONS

▶ HAD **106** POLL MONITORS ACROSS **28** POLLING LOCATIONS IN **5** COUNTIES ENSURING THAT EVERY ELIGIBLE VOTER WAS ABLE TO VOTE

▶ **790** NEW INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED THROUGH OUR VOTER TO MEMBER PROGRAM

▶ SENT OUT OVER **84,900** ELECTION PROTECTION TEXTS IN BOTH SPANISH AND ENGLISH

Over
12,300
New Voters
Registered

12
New Member
Orientations held
across four cities



Held **3** mail-in ballot parties in Reading, Allentown and Philadelphia engaging over **350** voters

Knocked on over

53,800

doors to get out the vote
across Berks, Bucks,
Philadelphia, Luzerne, and
Lehigh counties



Sent over **949,800** texts to unregistered voters across four counties encouraging them to register to vote before the voter registration deadline



Sent over **875,300** community messenger videos and messages via text across four counties to get out the vote



Sent over **188,700** texts to voters across three counties who requested a mail-in ballot to vote early and by mail, including inviting them to our mail-in ballot parties



Spoke with over **4,500** voters

In the News

Why there's a long-standing voter registration gap for Latinos and Asian Americans

(<https://www.npr.org/2024/04/02/1238751749/voter-registration-gap-racial>)

Allentown advocates condemn lawmaker's anti-immigration bills (<https://www.mcall.com/2024/01/17/a-lehigh-valley-lawmaker-says-his-bills-would-curb-illegal-immigration-activists-say-theyre-anti-immigrant/>)

Honduran mother at risk of deportation in Philadelphia

(<https://www.telemundo62.com/videos/videos-noticias/madre-hondurena-en-riesgo-de-deportacion-en-filadelfia/2372589/>)

Cherelle Parker's first statements as mayor of Philadelphia

(<https://www.telemundo62.com/noticias/decision/local-decision/primeras-declaraciones-de-cherelle-parker-como-alcaldesa-de-filadelfia/2364116/>)





A word from our new **Co-Executive Directors**

Firstly we would like to express our immense gratitude to Maegan for her vision and leadership in shaping this organization into what it is today. We will miss her dearly and are profoundly grateful for her foresight and belief in our ability to lead this next chapter.

It is an honor to step into this role and lead such a powerful organization. With your unwavering support, we have grown to a team of 34 across four cities, strengthened our presence in Pennsylvania, won significant victories for our communities and built real electoral power through our civic engagement work.

We commit to leading with love, empathy and ferocity.

A second Trump administration will bring profound challenges for our families and communities, but we believe in our resilience and collective strength. The road ahead will be long and difficult, but we couldn't be more grateful to continue this fight alongside you. Your dedication and relentless pursuit of justice for working-class communities of color in Pennsylvania will help build a world rooted in dignity and respect for all.

We step into this new chapter with determination, unity, and an unshakable belief in the power of collective action. Together we will continue building a strong movement led by our members' voices and standing firm against injustice.

Yours in the Struggle,

Diana Robinson and Patty Torres
Co-Executive Directors



Make the Road PA builds power for justice in Latinx communities, communities of color and working class communities, with organizing centers located in Allentown, Reading, Philadelphia and Hazleton.

WWW.MAKETHEROADPA.ORG

